



Conference Policy

PURPOSE

The purpose of this policy is to define the principles and processes that guide the organization and presentation of the Association's conference.

DEFINITIONS AND SCOPE OF POLICY

This policy is intended to provide an overview of the key components of the organization and presentation of the Association's conference. Specific procedures surrounding these activities are detailed in a separate document.

POLICY STATEMENT

The Association is committed to organizing and presenting a conference that meets the professional learning and networking needs of its membership and is consistent with the financial, legal, and operational requirements of the Association.

The Association's conference is an annual event that serves a variety of purposes for the Association and its membership, including the provision of:

- professional learning sessions for members;
- formal sessions, roundtables, panels, member-input sessions, information sessions, etc. for members to discuss and resolve the issues facing the Association and the profession;
- a forum for consultation with the presidents of the provincial / territorial archival councils and associations;
- an opportunity to meet the requirements under the Canada Not-for-Profit Corporations Act to hold an Annual General Meeting (AGM);
- occasions to transact the business of the Association, its Committees and Special Interest Sections;
- circumstances to further the development of the Canadian archival community; and
- revenue generating activities to sustain the continuing operations of the Association.

The remainder of this section is divided into the following sections: conference locations, finances, conference content, and logistics.

Conference Locations

As a national organization, the Association holds its conference at locations across the country so that as many members as possible have the opportunity to attend the conferences. The Association moves the location of the conference among Canada's five regions to promote greater access to the conference. Given the limited availability of conference facilities capable of accommodating the conference and the costs of some locations, the number of possible locations where the conference can be held unfortunately is finite despite the desire of individuals to have the conference in their communities. The Association will monitor costs and the availability of new or renovated facilities in communities in an attempt to accommodate requests that remain open.



The Association solicits invitations from member groups to hold the conference but may also evaluate conference locations initially independent of the receipt of a proposal. The Association bases its decisions for conference locations in part on the following criteria:

- an evaluation of facilities available to meet the space and other requirements of the conference;
- the locations of conferences preceding the sites under consideration;
- the costs for members and delegates to attend the conference in terms of room rates and other expenses; and
- the costs to the Association to present the conference in terms of facilities and other required services.

Finances

The annual conference is the key source of revenue for the Association. A strong effort should be made to ensure the conference generates a reasonable surplus that can be directed back to Association programs and activities. As a guideline, a conference should generate a surplus of between \$30,000 and \$50,000, but the Association acknowledges that this goal is not possible at every conference location. Revenue from conference registration, corporate fund-raising, donations, and the sale of banquet and other social event tickets should more than offset the expenses incurred (i.e., room rentals, food and beverage, printing, AV rentals, delegate materials, speakers expenses, etc.). Due attention must be paid to cost management in all aspects of the conference.

Conference registration fees are reviewed on a 3-5 year basis. The following principles apply to conference registration fees:

- All refunds of fees are subject to an administration fee. The policies regarding the refunding of conference fees are outlined on the registration form.
- Complimentary session access without meals or social activities is provided for non-member speakers and commentators only attending their own session to make their presentation.
- Any requests for reimbursement or partial payment of a conference registration fee must be approved by the Board.
- Funding is not typically provided for speakers, but the Association will consider requests for such support. The Association offers international and U.S. presenters financial consideration in the form providing them with the available members' rate at time of registration.

Conference Content

The primary content of the conference is derived from discussions of professional practices, issues, concerns, and new developments within the archival profession that are likely to interest participants and promote attendance at the conference. The content of each conference is structured around a theme which informs but does not limit the presentation, format, or topics of sessions and workshops at that conference.

“Promotional” presentations at the conference by sponsors or commercial enterprises are discouraged and take place only with prior Board approval. Businesses are encouraged to participate in the conference’s trade show and to advertise their services through advertisements in the conference program, the website, or other options.



Logistics

The Association recognizes that the organization and presentation of the conference is a significant undertaking that involves many tasks, each assigned to individuals responsible for meeting certain outcomes at specific deadlines. The conference planning and implementation process involves a partnership of the Association's Board (to provide general governance and financial oversight), its Secretariat (to provide strategic operational support), and teams of selected members (to provide program content and hosting support) working together as seamlessly as possible to create a successful conference. An overarching Conference Operations Guide defines the roles, responsibilities, processes, deliverables, and timelines for the Board, Secretariat, and conference teams in order to promote communication, understanding, and effective working relationships among the partners.

POLICY REQUIREMENTS

In order to achieve the goals of this policy, the Association will:

- Hold its conference at locations throughout Canada, balancing the need to provide members around the country with access to the conference with the need for revenue generation and prudent expenditures.
- Appoint Program and Host Teams to coordinate specific aspects of the conference.
- Approve a Conference Operations Guide to define roles and responsibilities for the Board, the Secretariat, and the Program and Host Teams.

ACCOUNTABILITIES

General Principles

Association members are bound by the Volunteer Code of Conduct when participating in Association business, declaring conflicts of interest, and maintaining confidentiality of information. Employees and contractors of the Association are bound by the terms of their job descriptions or contracts regarding the handling of their duties; in the absence of any specific terms, this policy and the Volunteer Code of Conduct will apply as best practices documents.

Board of Directors

The Board of Directors ensures that Association members from across Canada have the opportunity to attend an intellectually stimulating and career enhancing professional development event on a multi-year basis. The Board attempts to situate the Conference in each region of Canada on as equitable a basis as reasonably possible, and it controls costs surrounding the conference (both for the Association as well as for members and delegates) while realizing the Association's financial objectives.

The Board also approves the official operations guide for the Conference, which defines the roles of and the activities undertaken by the Board, the Secretariat, a Program Team, and a Host Team. The Board reviews the guide with the input of the Program and Host Teams and ACA staff on a regular basis to ensure that the operations guide remains current. To prevent miscommunications about their roles, members of the Board of Directors as well as all members of the two Teams are required to familiarize themselves with the Conference Operations Guide.



Specifically, the duties of the Board of Directors with respect to the conference include:

- Following the requirements for the timing and location of the AGM outlined in the Association's Bylaws, and designating the location for the Conference and AGM at least two years in advance of the conference date;
- Approving the location of the conference based on an evaluation of costs and previous locations;
- Approving the dates of the conference based on the following elements:
 - Avoiding scheduling conflicts with other major archival and information management conferences (e.g. Society of American Archivists, L'association des archivistes du Québec, ARMA etc.);
 - Scheduling the inclusion of a weekend (or part thereof) in order to take advantage of potentially reduced weekend rates for facilities and travel costs;
 - Ensuring that there are no less than two and no more than three conference session days planned; and
 - Reserving one day for meetings and one or two days for workshops (if offered), for a total of a five or six day conference.
- Appointing a volunteer Host Team Chair and Program Team Chair at least 18 months in advance of the event;
- Reviewing and, if acceptable, approving members of the Host and Program Teams as submitted by the respective chairs;
- Reviewing and approving the conference theme and call for submissions developed by the Program Team;
- Reviewing and approving the overall schedule / structure of the program, ensuring that sufficient time is allowed for specific conference events required by the Board or Host Team and that there are no conflicts with the Association's facilities contract that might incur unanticipated expenses;
- Reviewing and approving Host Team's plans for social activities, in terms of proposed venues, amount of transportation required, any limits of numbers of activity participants, and any fees charged in order to cover costs (a majority of social activities aside from the opening reception are break-even or revenue positive); and
- Participating in specific events as directed in the conference program.

A member of the Board serves with the Secretariat as a liaison with the Host and Program Team chairs and to the Board.

The Board approves all financial decisions with respect to the conference, including fees for registration, workshops, the trade show, conference sponsorships, social activities and advertising. Funding is typically not provided for speakers, but the Board will hear any requests for such funding. Fees are cost-based, with the Host Team Chair to disclose all expected costs to the Board liaison and the Executive Director, for calculation on activity and overall costs at the planning stage for activity by activity approval. Delegate and workshop registration fees are reviewed every 3-5 years.

The Board approves any requests for "promotional" presentations, which are typically messages by conference sponsors and are not information sessions.

With input from the Host and Program Team Chairs, the Board makes any final decision regarding all other aspects of the Conference, such as changes to its structure or the addition of sessions, particularly when costs are involved.



Secretariat

The Secretariat, including the Executive Director, the Client Services Coordinator and any other temporary conference staff, coordinate a number of logistical aspects for the annual conference including: financial management of all aspects of the conference, including registration, social event, partner and sponsor fees; evaluation of conference facilities; negotiating contracts with conference suppliers (hotel rooms, meeting spaces, food, AV, transportation, etc.); registering delegates; and formatting and printing the conference schedule, forms, badges, tickets and on-site signage as required.

The Executive Director prepares an evaluation of facilities and costs for use by the Board in its determination of future conference locations.

The Executive Director works in close consultation with the Board liaison and the Host Chair to ensure that a realistic conference budget is established; revenue estimates should be conservative while cost estimates should reflect past experience or proposed actual costs where available. The Executive Director also coordinates, in conjunction with the Host Team, national financial sponsorship of the conference. Any requests for changes to fee structures are to be submitted by the Host Team Chair to the Board liaison and the Executive Director, who submits them to the Board of Directors for consideration.

The Executive Director also works closely with the Program Chair on all matters related to session content, including production / printing of the conference program.

The Secretariat also responds to requests from international or U.S. presenters that wish to take advantage of the member's registration rate.

All details regarding the roles, responsibilities, reporting relationships, and duties of the members of the Secretariat are contained within the Conference Operations Guide. To prevent miscommunications about their roles, members of the Secretariat are required to familiarize themselves with the Conference Operations Guide.

Program Team

In general, the Program Team is responsible for putting together the content of the conference sessions, including keynotes (plenaries) and concurrent sessions. Activities within this role include:

- Developing a conference theme and call for submissions, which is submitted to the Board for approval.
- Distributing the approved theme and call for submissions;
- Reviewing all proposals submitted for sessions and selecting the content of the conference, including the poster session;
- Creating the schedule of sessions by selecting presenters, session chairs and commentators, which is then submitted for approval by the Board so that the Board can identify any timing conflicts or unanticipated expenses;
- Overseeing the delivery of program sessions over the duration of the conference, including the recruitment of session chairs and commentators for sessions; and
- Attending the conference, with each Team member shepherding a share of the sessions.



All members of the Program Team must be members in good standing of the Association during their membership on the Team.

All details regarding the roles, responsibilities, reporting relationships, and duties of the Program Team are contained within the Conference Operations Guide. To prevent miscommunications about their roles, members of the Program Team are required to familiarize themselves with the Conference Operations Guide.

Host Team

In general, the role of the Host Team oversees the local hospitality aspects for delegates. Activities within this role include:

- Identifying suitable locations and scheduling conference activities (other than the content of program sessions) including the opening reception, evening socials, the annual ball game and visits to local facilities of interest;
- Submitting its plans for social activities (including proposed venues, amount of transportation required, any limits of numbers of activity participants, and any fees charged in order to cover costs) to the Board for review and approval;
- Recommending selections for luncheons, receptions and dinner within budget constraints, while providing delegates the opportunity to experience local food and beverage, as well as local sights and sounds;
- Recruiting, in conjunction with the Secretariat, financial sponsors and supporters of the conference at the local level; and
- Coordinating publicity in conjunction with the Association's Communications Committee, including the use of social media.

All members of the Host Team must be members in good standing of the Association during their participation on the Team.

In particular, any social event activity costs must be identified by the Host Team for review by the Board liaison and the Executive Director for approval. All social events should be cost-recovery, supported by modest admission fees or by a sponsorship. Any requests for changes to fee structures are to be submitted by the Host Team Chair to the Board liaison and the Executive Director, who will submit them to the Board of Directors for consideration.

All details regarding the roles, responsibilities, reporting relationships, and duties of the Host Team are contained within the Conference Operations Guide. To prevent miscommunications about their roles, members of the Host Team are required to familiarize themselves with the Conference Operations Guide.

Members

As the primary stakeholders of the Association, members are encouraged to suggest future locations for the conference, volunteer for the conference planning teams, attend the conference, and express opinions regarding the planning and presentation of the conference to improve the overall experience.